

this issue and who have pushed for the exemption in the past.

I am proud to offer this legislation along with Ranking Member LANE EVANS of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. EVANS and his staff have been seeking a remedy for this inequity for several years.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to offer legislation benefiting America's military service members and helping them to attend college or receive job training.

#### TRIBUTE ON THE RETIREMENT OF ED PEREZ

**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor the 30 years of service that Ed Perez, Esq. has given to the City of Los Angeles. Although his retirement from the City Attorney's Office on February 17th marks the end of his City employment, it does not end a notable career in the practice of law. Indeed, his contributions to the City's telecommunications policies have been so great that several members of the City Council hope he will return as an advisor.

As the City continues to negotiate franchise agreements and shape important telecommunication policies that impact the everyday lives of all Angelinos, we understand the value and depth of expertise that a faithful employee brings to the table at this critical time.

Mr. Perez began his initial employment with the Office of the City Attorney in the Criminal Division and switched to the Civil Division 3 years later. In that position he provided legal advice regarding public utilities such as telecommunications and energy, and transactional matters for the City's Information Technology Agency.

Mr. Perez was the City's legal advisor for cable television franchising and regulation from 1981–2003, beginning with the initial wiring of the city in 1981 and culminating in the citywide franchising agreements in 1987. During this period, Mr. Perez had the distinguished honor of presenting an oral argument before the United States Supreme Court in 1986, in the *Preferred Communications v. City of Los Angeles*, 476 U.S. 488. For this, we offer our sincere appreciation to Ed Perez for both his commitment to and invaluable understanding of these issues on behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles.

When Mr. Perez transferred to the Department of Water and Power in June 2003, he continued to be one of the principal attorneys monitoring complex utility regulations for the City.

He looks forward to more time with his wife Patricia, and their children, Christine and David, upon his retirement. I wish him all the best as he plans for an active retirement and sincerely thank him for his noteworthy accomplishments on behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LAUNCH OF U.S.-KOREA FTA NEGOTIATIONS

**HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, in a ceremony held February 2, 2006, in the Mansfield Room of the U.S. Capitol and attended by many Members of Congress, U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman and South Korean Minister of Trade Hyun-Chong Kim announced the commencement of negotiations toward a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement and signaled their commitment to conclude the talks by March 2007. The U.S. and Korea plan to implement the agreement by September 2007. In light of the fact that the FTA negotiations will officially begin next week, I rise to recognize the significance of this undertaking.

Launching the United States-South Korea FTA talks is a critical step in the relationship with an important U.S. strategic ally and economic partner. I strongly believe that as we pursue market access for U.S. exporters, it is to our advantage to strengthen already constructive relationships with our allies. South Korea is our seventh largest trading partner and a friend in a challenging region of the world. Advancing the economic relationship makes sense and will be an important benefit to two great nations.

Close engagement between the U.S. and South Korea has paved the way for FTA negotiations. Even before the official announcement, the South Korean Government demonstrated how important it considers improved trade relations with the United States. South Korea took the concrete step of reducing the long-standing quotas that limited the screening of films by the American entertainment industry. I am encouraged by the progress that has been made so far on addressing several trade concerns. I am confident that South Korea will continue to work closely with the USTR Rob Portman toward making this endeavor a success.

The FTA negotiations will officially begin on May 3, following the expiration of the statutory 90-day consultative period. In the interim, our two governments have agreed to hold preliminary discussions. According to reports, once the FTA takes full effect, over 90 percent of traded goods between the U.S. and Korea will be phased out over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of underscoring the importance of these talks, permit me to list a few salient facts about the U.S.-Korean economic relationship.

South Korea is a stable, democratic country with a free-enterprise economy and a gross domestic product of \$726.5 billion in 2005, making it the world's 11th largest economy.

The per capita income of South Koreans in 2004 is an impressive \$14,162.

As noted by the Los Angeles Times, South Korea is now the seventh largest trading partner of the United States, with over \$72 billion in trade volume each year. Moreover, South Korea is the fifth largest market for U.S. agricultural products.

U.S. exports into South Korea totaled \$25.1 billion through November of 2005, up 4.6 percent from the same period in 2004, with the biggest U.S. sales coming in computer chips, \$4.2 billion; industrial machinery, \$1.4 billion,

organic chemicals, \$1.3 billion, and civilian aircraft at \$953 million.

At the same time, South Korean exports to the United States totaled \$40.1 billion through November 2005, down 5.4 percent from the same period in 2004, with the biggest South Korean sales coming in passenger cars, \$7.2 billion; household goods, including cell phones, at \$5.7 billion; computer chips, \$2.8 billion; and computer accessories, televisions, and VCRs at \$3.9 billion.

According to a study done in 2001 by the U.S. International Trade Commission, a U.S.-Korea free-trade agreement could increase U.S. exports to South Korea by \$19 billion and U.S. imports from South Korea by \$10 billion.

Finally, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, during the 2004 calendar year, 627,000 South Koreans visited the United States for tourism and business travel, representing the fifth largest foreign market of tourists, excluding Canada and Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I wish to recognize the launch of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement negotiations and I encourage my colleagues to offer their own expressions of support. South Korea is a long-standing and trustworthy ally of the United States and a mutual FTA would only further solidify and reinforce our alliance partnership.

#### TRIBUTE TO 2005 NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate and honor Drs. Roy J. Glauber, John L. Hall, and Theodor Hänsch for being awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for 2005, and Drs. Yves Chauvin, Robert H. Grubbs, and Richard R. Schrock for being awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for 2005.

The 2005 Nobel Prize in Physics encompasses the field of optics and its applications. The three gentlemen celebrated today are laser pioneers. Lasers have numerous practical applications, including in products such as CD players and grocery store scanners, for computer manufacturing, and in surgery.

Roy Glauber gave a detailed, quantum mechanical description of the interaction of light and matter, thus creating the foundation for the field of quantum optics. Glauber's work also created the groundwork on the quantum theory of lasers.

In addition, John Hall and Theodor Hänsch received the prize for their contributions to the development of laser-based precision spectroscopy. This technique allows scientists to probe the atom with ever-increasing accuracy, explore the subtle intricacies of gravity, and lead to a better understanding of the pressing question of imbalance between the amounts of matter and antimatter in the universe.

The work of the three in concert will lead, for instance, to the next generation satellite navigation systems, improving on GPS, which is widely used in both military and civilian transportation systems. Another major potential application of this research, quantum cryptography, which could impenetrably secure data transmission, is of interest to financial institutions and governments as the emerging